



Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.
1 Acy Avenue
Jackson, OH 45640-9562
(800) 582-7277
TTY: 711
www.aaa7.org

Ohio Senate Health Committee
Teresa Reed-Powell, Director of Community Services
Area Agency on Aging District 7
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Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Senate Health Committee, I am submitting this written testimony as the Director of Community Services, Teresa Reed-Powell, of the Area Agency on Aging District 7.

The Area Agency on Aging District 7 serves ten rural counties in Southern Ohio including Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto, and Vinton. These counties have a poverty rate range of 10-18%. The 60 and older population make up more than a quarter of the population in each of these counties. The Area Agency on Aging District 7 provides a wide range of home and community-based services that support seniors living within our communities that include resource and referral information, community resources, Medicaid Waiver services, and Older Americans Act programs. We also provide Housing Trust Fund services for qualifying seniors completing minor home repairs through the Housing Assistance Grant Program from the Ohio Department of Development that is funded through the county recorder fees.

Through the Ohio Housing Trust Fund, we have been able to assist seniors with remaining in their homes by adding wheelchair ramps, widening doors, repairing plumbing, HVAC, roofs, furnace systems, replacing water heaters, modifying bathrooms and kitchens, making homes more accessible and supporting their continued independence, enabling seniors across our ten counties to maintain in a safe living environment. The twelve AAAs have the infrastructure of administrative staff that review all applications, Housing Specialists that review the requested work, and vetted contractors to complete the work to agency standards in an efficient and cost-effective way by having the ability to leverage other funding sources at our disposal.

The Ohio Housing Trust Fund is especially important to counties like ours due to current law requirements that state at least fifty percent of Ohio Housing Trust Fund dollars to go to Ohio's non-urban counties. Our smaller and poorer counties do not have the infrastructure nor the amount of fees to meet the needs of our counties. Over fifty percent of Ohio Housing Trust Fund comes from larger urban counties. The State oversight ensures that Ohio Housing Trust Fund dollars are matched maximizing the return on each dollar spent.

On behalf of the seniors living in rural counties in Ohio, we ask your thoughtful consideration to reinstate the requirement that Ohio Housing Trust Fund fees collected by the county recorder be deposited into the Ohio Housing Trust Fund.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.
Teresa Reed-Powell